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FROM COVID-19 TO PUTIN-22: WHO NEEDS FRIENDS WITH ENEMIES LIKE THESE?

DOCUMENTATION BAUDRILLARD, CAPITAL CENTRAK BANK, CHEAP MONEY, QE, WAR MACHINE

Like a textbook illustration of Hollywood continuity editing, the de-escalation of the war on Covid has transitioned seamlessly into the escalation of the Ukrainian war, with Vladimir Putin replacing Virus as public enemy number one. If the emergency changeover was predictable, the timing of the overlap seemed almost too smooth to be credible. Corporate media's creative choreography, however, has secured a one-dimensional representation of Putin's war, even adding special

effects when needed: from video games like *War Thunder*, *Arma 3* and *Digital Combat Simulator*, to clips of past disasters. In retrospect, the apocalyptic footage of people collapsing in Wuhan City in January 2020 now appears decidedly amateurish.

When Jean Baudrillard wrote that the 'Gulf War did not take place', he meant that its violence was overwritten as a media spectacle (simulacrum) that turned it into *hyperreality*: something *so unequivocally and overwhelmingly real* that it suspends any question, doubt, or disbelief regarding the intrinsic opacity of the referent. Covid and the Russian invasion are emphatic explosions of hyperreality. As such, they fall on us like a blanket that covers all reality in its complexity, replacing it with a pre-packaged model of false binary oppositions: healthy/sick, true/false, democratic/fascist, Good/Evil. How else could we explain the decision by Meta Platforms (Facebook and Instagram) to allow their users to call for violence against Russians (apparently a temporary change to their hate speech policy)? Or the suspension of a University course on Fyodor Dostoevsky *because he was Russian*? Or a private clinic's refusal to treat Russians and Belarusians? Is it not clear that the pandemic and the Ukrainian affair mobilize the same war strategy?

There is no longer any connection between reality and its hyperreal caricature in the social metaverse. Putin's war is the ideal continuation of the 'war on Covid.' The overarching aim is to obfuscate the real issue at stake, which consists of *pulling mountains of cheap money into the debt-addicted economy*. The *emergency loop* is the macroeconomic event of our time. Let us explore this claim further.

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